

CARE NEEDED IN USE OF PACIFIERS

An extensive market survey of pacifiers by the Health Protection Branch of Health Canada indicates that some pacifiers sold in Canada do not pass current mechanical or structural tests and risk coming apart in a child's mouth. To date, no injuries have been reported. Product descriptions are available from Health Canada product-safety offices in major centres.

Health Canada said in a news release that parents and caregivers who provide children with pacifiers should never tie them around the baby's neck. They should examine pacifiers frequently to ensure the nipple is firmly attached and discard them if the nipple changes colour or texture. As well, pacifiers should be replaced after 2 months regardless of their appearance.

OMA CONCERNED ABOUT SCOPE OF NURSES' PRACTICE

The Ontario Medical Association (OMA) is concerned about a government plan to allow nurse practitioners to provide medical treatment independently without back-up support. The OMA says 1- and 2-year education and training programs proposed by the Ministry of Health will have to equip nurses to perform five new controlled acts — communicating a diagnosis, prescribing drugs, setting and casting a bone fracture or joint dislocation, applying or ordering the application of forms of energy (such as initiating defibrillation), and prescribing hearing aids. The OMA says these represent an "extraordinary and unilateral" expansion in nurses' scope of

practice. "Government's disregard for consultation and its own legislative process raises serious concerns," said Dr. Michael Wyman, the president.

Dr. Wendy Graham, a family physician in North Bay and member of the OMA board, said nurse practitioners who practise independently and primarily see relatively healthy people may not recognize serious illnesses in their early stages. Even though the government has suggested nurse practitioners might solve human-resource problems in underserved areas, the lack of facilities and professional support makes providing primary care service in rural and isolated areas challenging.

Since nurse practitioners will be trained to do only a fraction of a family doctor's job, substituting them for physicians would do a profound disservice to patients, Graham said. There may be potential for integrating nurse practitioners into multidisciplinary teams in urban areas, Wyman added, but "it's a luxury we simply cannot afford . . . when hospital beds are being cut and waiting lists continue to grow."

RESEARCH IN SASKATCHEWAN COULD LEAD TO IMPROVED CANCER THERAPY

A University of Saskatchewan research team headed by Dr. Louis Delbaere has identified the receptor site where a drug shown to display potential anticancer properties binds a key protein found in all cells in the body, both normal and abnormal. The Medical Research Council of Canada, which is funding the project, says the

finding could lead to improved drug therapy for cancer patients.

The protein, known as calmodulin, appears to play a pivotal role as an intracellular receptor regulating cell propagation and growth, but is significantly elevated in cancer cells that have begun uncontrolled multiplication, said the council. The antipsychotic drug trifluoperazine binds to the calmodulin and slows cancer cell propagation, also enhancing the effectiveness of other anticancer agents. The overall objective of the research is to gain more knowledge about receptor sites so drugs can be developed to target only cancer cells.

ALMOST ONE IN FIVE ONTARIANS HAS A MENTAL DISORDER

A comprehensive epidemiologic study of mental health in Ontario has found that 18.6% of residents aged 15 to 64 had at least one mental disorder, yet 75% of those affected had not sought help. The Mental Health Supplement of the Ontario Health Survey, undertaken by researchers at McMaster University and the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry, measured antisocial behaviour, alcohol and drug abuse, anxiety disorders, bulimia and affective disorders such as depression.

Sex was an important variable, researchers found; women were most likely to be affected by anxiety and affective disorders while substance abuse and antisocial behaviour were more common among men. Economic disadvantage was also a factor; people suffering from anxiety disorders were more than three times as likely to have low incomes or be on public assis-

tance, and those with affective disorders were 2.5 times more likely to be unemployed. Almost 25% of those aged 15 to 24 reported one or more disorders in the previous 12 months, and 138 000 Ontarians reported they had limitations due to emotions, "nerves" or mental illness.

1200 PACEMAKER LEADS RECALLED

Health Canada has advised Canadians who have received Accufix "J" pacemakers to have them checked for possible lead breakages. The advisory follows a recall on the pacemaker leads by Teletronics Pacing Systems of Markham, Ont. About 1200 of the 100 000 Canadians implanted with pacemakers are believed to have the Accufix leads.

To date no lead breakage or related injuries or deaths have been reported in Canada. However, among the 42 000 leads in use around the world since 1987, there have been 13 cases of breakage that resulted in two deaths. The recall affects models 330-801, 329-701 and 033-812. The manufacturer is working with hospitals and physicians to identify all patients who received these leads. Physicians can call 800 267-9675 for more information.

MSNS NOMINATES KAZIMIRSKI

Dr. Judith Kazimirski, former chair of the CMA Board of Directors, is the Medical Society of Nova Scotia's nominee for the CMA presidency in 1996-97. Tradition holds that the president-elect is chosen from the province hosting the CMA annual general meeting in the following year; her nomination must be ratified at the 1995 CMA annual meeting, to be held in Winnipeg Aug. 13-16. If confirmed, Kazimirski, a family physician from Windsor, NS, will succeed Winnipeg pediatrician Jack Armstrong, who in August will assume the presidency for the 1995-96 term.

MEDICAL HALL OF FAME TO HOLD MAY CEREMONY IN VANCOUVER

The Canadian Medical Hall of Fame will hold its second annual ceremony to recognize the accomplishments of Canadian medical pioneers May 29 at the Trade and Convention Centre, Vancouver. Up to six Canadians, living or dead, will be chosen for induction into the hall in three categories: clinical medicine, basic medical research and applied medical research.

The brainchild of Dr. Calvin Stiller, chief of multiorgan transplant services at University Hospital in London, Ont., the Medical Hall of Fame was established in 1994 at London's new convention centre. The 10 inaugural inductees included Sir William Osler and Dr. Maude Abbott. The 1995 laureates will be chosen by a selection committee comprising Dr. Michel Chrétien, Dr. Henry Friesen, Dr. Richard Goldbloom, Dr. Murray Goldstein, Dr. Fraser Mustard and Dr. Michael Smith. Information about the Vancouver ceremony is available by calling 604 987-2754.

NEW ANTITOBACCO CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

Health Canada's latest antitobacco media campaign was launched Jan. 10, featuring three television commercials and three print advertisements. The TV ads focus on the health hazards of second-hand tobacco smoke and the chemical constituents of tobacco; the print ads provide more detailed information and a toll-free number to call for fact sheets on second-hand smoke, tobacco sales to minors, smoking and indoor air quality, cessation programs and other tobacco issues.

Health Canada says extensive market research was conducted to determine which messages and issues were relevant to the target groups: parents/caregivers who smoke, opinion leaders, youth and the general public. The last advertising campaign

urging youth to break free from smoking was withdrawn after widespread criticism that the target group viewed the ads as ineffective and irrelevant.

STUDENTS BOWLED OVER BY POSTERS

An Alberta poster campaign on the harmful consequences of excessive drinking among university and college students is both irreverent and popular. Posters using an "if you drink, don't bowl" theme depict variations on that theme, including one with a picture of a young man with his head over a toilet bowl and the caption: "It wasn't only his lack of a condom that chilled her passion that night."

The poster campaign is sponsored by the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission and the Association of Canadian Distillers. The Addiction Research Foundation says researchers had trouble keeping the posters on the walls during pilot test evaluations at the University of Calgary and Lethbridge Community College. Even though many posters were taken for "private collections," 84% of students said the ads made them think about the consequences of drinking too much.

SMOKERS' FINAL FRONTIER TARGETED

A new smoking-cessation guide that targets the "final frontier" of smokers — low-income men and women aged 18 to 45 who have a high-school education or less — has been launched by the Lung Association. *Get on Track* is a free self-help guide that provides information on how to get ready to quit, what to do when you are quitting and how to stay a nonsmoker. It includes a nicotine quiz, suggestions for personal rewards and helpful hints for those who get off track. For information or a free copy of the guide call 800 668-7682.